

**Editor's Welcome to *PORTAL* vol. 5, no. 2, 2008.**

This special issue of *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* is entitled 'Italian Cultures: Writing Italian Cultural Studies in the World,' guest edited by Ilaria Vanni (University of Technology Sydney). The issue aims at updating existing scholarship and scoping the proliferation of interests in the growing field of Italian cultural studies, whether conducted in Italy or outside that country. The issue proceeds from the premise that cultural studies practitioners write multiple Italies within Italy itself and from provincialized Italies, with a perspective that is both global and informed by specific local knowledge. As Vanni says in her introduction to the special issue, a number of questions arise when critics attempt both to imagine and work within the relatively recent field of Italian cultural studies: 'Is there a specific genealogy to the study of cultures in Italy that intersects with the Anglophone definition of cultural studies? Is Italian cultural studies confined to cultural practices in Italy, or does it expand to include the cultural practices of the Italian diaspora? If there is an Italian cultural studies tradition, where is it? What do Italian cultural studies academics write about?' The contributions included here respond to such questions by drawing on a range of disciplinary and critical traditions to problematise received ideas about what Italy signifies and for whom.

This issue of *PORTAL* also contains an essay and two cultural works in its cultural works section. 'In the Age of Schizophrenia, Icebergs, and Things that Grip the Mind,' from the Vietnam-based visual artist, curator, and writer, Sue Hajdú, is an evocative meditation on Saigon as represented in the work of five Vietnamese photographers—Ngo Dinh Truc, Lam Hieu Thuan, Nguyen Tuong Linh, Bui The Trung Nam, and Bui Huu Phuoc—who were born in the 1970s and whose work is reproduced by permission here. In her response to these young artists' representations of contemporary Saigon, Hajdú notes how each photographer is inevitably grappling with the historically and nationally specific notion of contemporary Vietnamese time, 'the monumental demarcation line' signified by 1975. We also include in the cultural works section a suite of Spanish and English-language poems, 'From/De *Infernal : romantic*,' by Sydney based Vek Lewis, and a poem entitled 'Mutiple Strokes' by the Nigerian writer and critic, Obododimma Oha.

Paul Allatson, Chair, *PORTAL* Editorial Committee